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challenge

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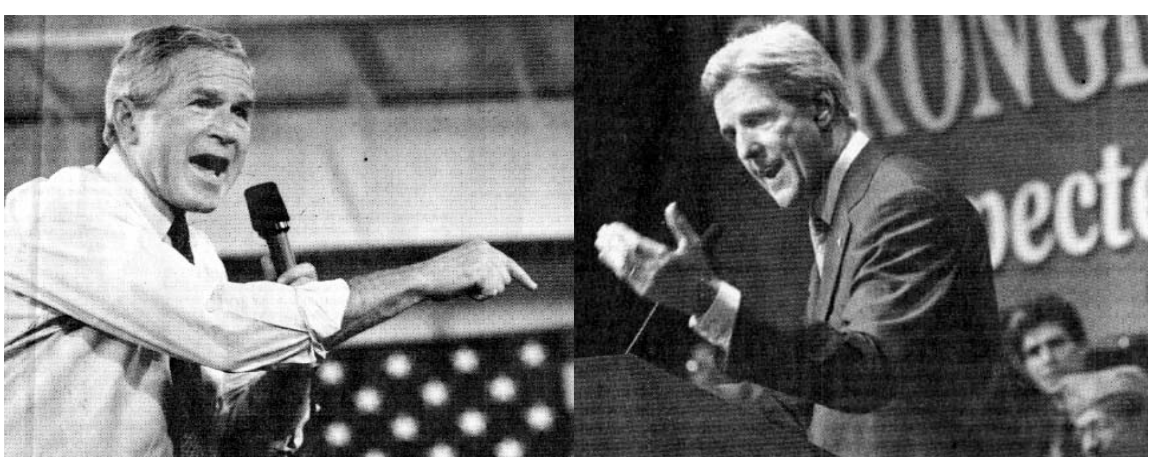
IRAQ WORSE THAN VIETNAM?



U.S. Rulers' 'Answer':

WIDER WAR, KILL THOUSANDS MORE

"Most senior U.S. military officers how believe the war on Iraq has turned into a disaster on an unprecedented scale." (Sidney Blumenthal — former Clinton advisor and Washington bureau chief of Salon.com — in The British Guardian, 9/16)

It's now quite clear the U.S. military was unprepared for urban guerrilla warfare in Iraq. Bush himself finally admitted it in an article in the N.Y. Times in August. The "transfer of power" to U.S. lackeys has not changed the military situation. The "new" Iraqi army and police either refuse to fight the insurgents or actually joined them as in the last uprising by Sadr in Najaf. The Marines had to destroy most of Najaf, alienating the Iraqi population even more. But many Pentagon officials and war supporters still gloat about the resounding success of U.S.-led forces last year in the major combat phase of the war — Operation "Iraqi Freedom."

In 21 days the U.S. defeated the Iraqi military, overthrew Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, and seemingly proved the wisdom of transforming the U.S. military into one that was lighter, swifter and laden with advanced technology. But now it appears this "transformation" has enabled a guerrilla insurgency to inflict over 1,000 deaths on U.S. soldiers and wound over 27,000. It recaptured the cities of Ramadi, Samarra, Baquba, among many others, and Sadr City in the heart of Baghdad.

Bush boasted to the National Guard convention that, "Our strategy is succeeding." And Kerry promises as President he'll have the U.S. out of Iraq in four years! "But," says Blumenthal, "according to the U.S. military's leading strategists and prominent retired generals, Bush's war is already lost."

• Retired general William Odom, former head of the National Security Agency told Blumenthal, "Bush hasn't found the WMD. Al Qaeda, it's worse, he's lost on that front. That he's going to achieve a democracy there? That goal is lost, too….Right now…we're achieving bin Laden's ends…. [as CHALLENGE predicted before the war began]. This is far graver than Vietnam…. We're in a region far more volatile, and we're in much worse shape with our allies."

• Retired general Joseph Hoare, former Marine commandant and head of U.S. Central Command, told Blumenthal, "The idea this is going to go the way these guys planned is ludicrous. There are no good options. We're conducting a campaign as though it were being conducted in Iowa, no sense of realities on the ground. It's so unrealistic for anyone who knows that part of the world…." Hoare believes that "a decision has been made" to attack Fallujah "after the first Tuesday in November. That's the cynical part of it — after the elections…. You could flatten it. US military force would prevail, casualties would be high,…their leadership would escape and civilians would be caught in the middle….And they talked about dancing in the street, a beacon for democracy."

• Jeffrey Record, professor of strategy at the Air War College, said, "I see no ray of light on the horizon at all. The worst case has become true."

• Andrew Terrill, professor at the Army War College's strategic studies institute and the top expert on Iraq there, said, "I don't think you can kill the insurgency….[It] is expanding and becoming more capable as a consequence of US policy…. We see larger and more coordinated military attacks. They are getting better and they can self-generate….There are people willing to fill the ranks of those who are killed. The political culture is more

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Insurance Co./Gov't Gang-up Soaks Hurricane Victims

Natural disasters always expose capitalism in many ways. The island of Grenada — the very same one Reagan invaded in 1983 to "save U.S. medical students from communism," (Cuban construction workers were helping to build an airport there) — was devastated by hurricane Ivan "the Terrible." It destroyed over 90% of all houses there. All these hurricanes have killed hundreds in Grenada, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and throughout the Southern and Eastern U.S. Meanwhile, the people of Florida — who suffered so much destruction from Charley, Frances and Ivan — are now seeing even worse destroyers: the insurance companies and their government servants.

"As Floridians begin picking up the pieces…many are also discovering the full effects of a decade of maneuvering from the insurance companies and state officials that has dramatically reduced the obligations of private insurers to pay for the impact of catastrophic storms."(Wall Street Journal, 9/7)

In 1992, hurricane Andrew slammed southeastern Florida, inflicting $15.5 billion in insured damages, "wiping out every cent of profit insurance companies had ever generated on property policies in the state." (WSJ) The losses forced 11 insurers out of business.

So the insurance industry and the state authorities responded by revamping the entire insurance system.

"Big players like Allstate Corp. agreed not to abandon a combined 1.2 million policyholders in Florida only after state officials began cooperating in a legislative and regulatory effort to shift from insurance companies to consumers the burden for paying hundreds of millions of future storm-related losses." (WSJ) After all, under capitalism bosses are not really in the business of insurance; they're in the business of making profits.

Now hundreds of thousands of homeowners, many of whom thought they were paying for "full" property insurance, "now find themselves holding the bag for a much bigger portion of the estimated $10 billion to $15 billion in insured damage from Frances and Charley than they would have a decade ago." (WSJ)

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RUSSIAN AND U.S. RULERS: RUTHLESS IMPERIALIST RIVALS

EDITORIAL

Russian President Putin recently sent the world a dire message written in the blood of children: Russia's rulers will stop at nothing to restore its imperial status. When Putin had his hit men storm the besieged Beslan school, he deliberately and needlessly wasted the lives of hundreds of students in order to wipe out a few dozen Chechen separatist murderers (see CHALLENGE, 9/22 on how the Chechen terrorists serve anti-Putin oil bosses). Putin had shown the same disregard for human life two years ago, when he ordered troops to retake a Moscow theater using poison gas, killing four times as many hostages as Chechen hostage-takers. Now, in response to the Beslan crisis, Putin has suspended the popular election of governors in Russia's 89 regions, lest any other separatists gain power. From now on the Kremlin will hand-pick governors.

Putin claims he's taking a hard line against terrorism. But he's really trying to rebuild an empire that can compete with the U.S. And oil and gas are keys to his strategy, just as they are for U.S. bosses. Russia's rulers plan to exert influence beyond its borders by becoming the dominant supplier of energy to Europe and China. But this requires constructing and controlling a network of pipelines across a vast territory. Putin will not brook interference from breakaway states like Chechnya, which sits astride an important export route for Caspian oil. The day after he ended elections, Putin announced the merger of gas giant Gazprom with oil producer Rosneft. The new firm will have nine times the reserves of Exxon Mobil. And, with the state owning a majority share, Gazprom-Rosneft will become a political weapon for the Kremlin. It will "spearhead whatever the government policy may be," said a London-based oil analyst (Bloomberg, 9/15). Putin had already forcibly wrested Yukos, which pumps as much crude as Iraq, from pro-U.S. ex-billionaire Mikhail Khodorkovsky. When Yukos's chief met with Exxon Mobil bosses last year to discuss selling them a big share of Yukos, Putin surrounded his house with armed soldiers. The deal fell through. Khodorkovsky now rots in a Moscow jail.

Putin's heavy-handed plan for Russian "greatness" goes beyond slaughtering schoolchildren, abolishing voting rights and seizing the energy industry. He wants to turn the clock back to the 1960s and 1970s, when the state capitalist Soviet Union supplied military equipment to virtually every nation or rebel group that claimed to oppose U.S. imperialism. Boasting in a September 17th speech that Russian arms sales had shot up 15% from 2002 to 2003, Putin said. "We must broaden the geographic scope of these sales and involve new partners in our sphere of cooperation." (Le Monde, 9/17) Currently the biggest buyers are India and China, which U.S. rulers view as potential military threats in the decades to come.

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These aren't the actions of an "evil madman," as the U.S. media likes to portray Putin. They reflect the needs of the Russian capitalist class. U.S. rulers, with similar imperialist designs, are implementing their agenda of war and fascism with a ruthlessness equal to Putin's. When profits are at stake, workers' lives mean nothing to capitalists. Nationalist and religious uprisings in Iraq are preventing U.S. oil barons from realizing their six-million-barrel-a-day dream. So down comes the iron fist of indiscriminate butchery. In April, Bush sent the Marines into Fallujah, "pulverizing neighborhoods and killing at least 800 people, most of them women and children," according to an eyewitness. Journalist Nir Rosen wrote in the October issue of The Atlantic, "I saw hospitals riddled with bullets and shells; I met ambulance drivers who had been wounded by snipers; I saw children missing limbs from Marine bullets and shells." Air raids that kill noncombatants are standard operating procedure. "The U.S. Air Force has stepped up its policy of trying to assault insurgents from the air while the army avoids ground attacks that could lead to heavy U.S. casualties....The truth about who is being killed by the US air strikes is difficult to ascertain exactly....But, where the casualties can be checked, many of those who die or are injured have proved to be innocent civilians." (The Independent, 9/18) This is the course Kerry promises to "stay" if he's elected in November.

On the home front, U.S. rulers are trying to forge a unified intelligence service on the model of the notorious KGB (where Putin got his start). With the Enron, Adelphia, Martha Stewart and other trials, U.S. rulers' jailing of wayward business executives matches the Kremlin's. But for the incarceration of the working class, not even Russia comes close to U.S. prisons, which now include Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and stateside detention centers for "suspected terrorists" — that is, people with Arabic names.

The profit system is merciless. It deserves to be terminated, mercilessly, by the working class in a communist revolution.✪

Insurance Co./Gov't Gang-up Soaks Hurricane Victims

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Florida's government allowed insurers to raise premiums as much as 400% in some cases and to add hefty new deductibles.

While Florida is the most affected by these changes, a similar situation has occurred across the country. In California, residents who face the threat of storms or wildfires must choose between bare-bones coverage or high-priced policies offered by specialist insurers like Lloyd's of London.

Now with Ivan hitting, and with experts predicting many more years of hurricanes, capitalism will probably force policyholders to pay still more. While natural disasters occur, the profit system makes them worse. Capitalism is the biggest disaster.✪

IRAQ WORSE THAN VIETNAM?

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hostile to the US presence. The more we stay, the more they are confirmed in that view."

General Odom told Blumenthal the tension between the Bush administration and the senior military officers was worse than any he has ever seen with any previous government, including Vietnam....There's a significant majority [of the military] believing this is a disaster. The two parties whose interests have been advanced have been the Iranians and al-Qaeda." And these forces, as well as the leadership of the insurgency, are enemies of workers worldwide, including Muslim workers.

These former generals and military strategists don't represent the interests of Iraqi and U.S. workers and soldiers. They want a wider and more successful war which will kill many more tens of thousands. For U.S. rulers it's crucial to remain the top-dog imperialist, to control Iraqi oil and establish military bases in the heart of the Middle East. Whether Bush or Kerry is in the White House, the ruling class cannot afford to give up control of the region's oil. They might try to expand the war regionally, possibly attacking Iran, which they're already blaming for backing the Iraqi insurgency.

It is the task of communists to win workers and soldiers to oppose this murderous ruling class and the religious and nationalist leaders of the insurgency, expose their profit system as the killer it is, and fight to turn their imperialist wars into class war for communism.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

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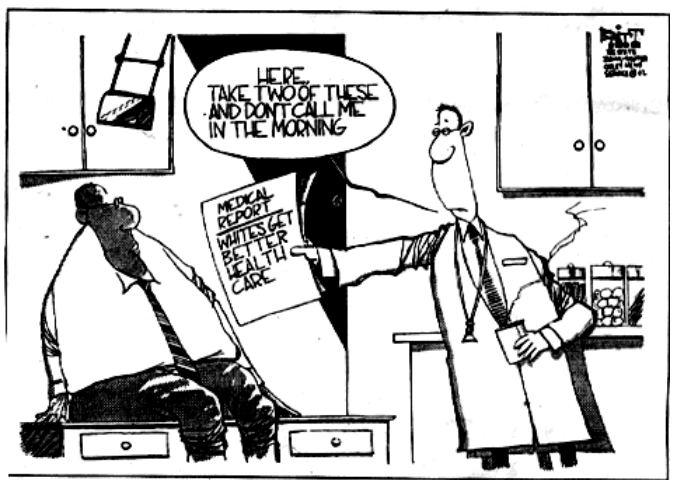
War Economy, Racism Hits Hospital Workers, Patients

MIAMI, Sept. 17 — A hurricane-like blast is hitting hospital workers and patients here. Jackson Memorial Hospital, the city's main public healthcare institution, will be laying off or re-assigning at lower pay up to 500 workers in order to save $26 million. Jackson is among a growing number of U.S. public hospitals that are cutting workers and patient services. This is a direct result of a half-trillion dollar war budget paid for by shrinking federal and state reimbursements to Medicare and Medicaid and thereby increasing public hospital "deficit," all of which have a distinct racist character. (As we go to press, Miami-Dade County announced it's granting the hospital a $76 million "relief package" but the bosses are still proceeding with the job cuts, exposing their determination to lay off these workers no matter what.)

Instead of launching a fight against the cuts, the unions — Local 1363 of the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) — is content to help the bosses: "Hospital and union leaders will meet in coming weeks to start choosing specific jobs to be cut." (Miami Herald, 9/16) The best Local 1363 president Vivienne Dixon-Shim can say is, "I'm very disappointed." [!] And the SEIU is the very same union that's threatening to leave the AFL-CIO because the latter is "not aggressive enough." Such is the state of class collaboration in the U.S. labor movement these days.

Public hospital systems in Los Angeles, Denver, Las Vegas, New York's Westchester County and Dallas are among those who have made similar cuts in recent years, on a list that's "expected to grow." (Herald) Alameda County, Calif., plans to cut 300 jobs at Oakland's Highland Hospital and had already cut two clinics.

All these public hospitals serve poor, working-class patients, including a large proportion of black, Latin and immigrant families. These groups are doubly victimized: because of racist wage and unemployment rates they cannot obtain services at the richer private hospitals, nor the health insurance plans that would pay for them. And now, their only source of what passes for "health care" — public hospitals — are cutting back on workers and services. In addition, a high proportion of the laid-off hospital workers themselves are black and Latin. Thus, racism is a central feature of these cuts.



THE 'DEFICIT' SCAM

The hospital bosses claim that increasing drug costs and declining federal and state reimbursements are creating a deficit and forcing these layoffs and service cuts. (Jackson expects an even larger "shortfall" next year.) However, their premise for the "deficit" is that workers must pay for the need of capitalism to make profit — especially the pharmaceutical companies — and for the bosses' need to finance endless imperialist wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere to protect that profit system (a system that had GI's wounded in Iraq paying for their meals in VA government hospitals!). "Deficits" are just another way for capitalism to exploit the working class. In this case, it shoves the cost of health care on the backs of the workers so that the bosses can pursue maximum profits.

If the working class, as healthcare workers and as patients, were the first priority, as they would be in a profit-free system — communism — there would be no "deficit." There would only be the collective desire of the working class as a whole to use the social value we produce to take care of the health of all those workers who need it. It's up to a communist-led working class to abolish all "deficits" by abolishing capitalism. That's the only way to guarantee the health of our class.✪

PROTESTORS SLAM HILLARY CLINTON ON IRAQ WAR, ASTHMA AND RACIST UNEMPLOYMENT

Last month my church provided a major photo-op for one of the ruling class's most dangerous agents, Senator Hillary Clinton, a possible Democratic nominee for President in 2008. She still maintains lots of support from black working people despite pushing welfare "reform" and supporting every imperialist war since 1991. This church appearance was to focus on the asthma epidemic that's killed over 50,000 working people in the last ten years and was the sole anti-racist issue John Kerry raised in his "bigger and better imperialism" acceptance speech, a cynical effort to hang onto the Democratic inner-city base. Clinton promised to get lots of HUD money for public housing health renovation if we elect Kerry.

The event was stage-managed by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), a leading old money financial movement to mislead church and community groups into suicidal reformism. True to form the sweltering hundreds packing the church were anaesthetized by bureaucratic report after report and then awakened by the Senator's lively, "You're-right-and-I'm-going-to-fix-it" speech. No question and answer period permitted.

As she finished I yelled out a "prayer" to "remember the 50,000 killed in the U.S. by asthma and the hundreds of thousands killed by sanctions and bombs in Iraq." But the chair drowned me out by closing the meeting with applause for the Senator.

Our club, plus four allies from a neighboring church, raised the Party's line by distributing over 300 leaflets linking imperialism and racism, along with posters lining the Senator's exit path. One comrade's poster read, "My son-in-law enlisted to study engineering, not to kill Iraqi civilians." Another decried the 48% unemployment in our ghetto community. I shouted, "How many Iraqi children did your sanctions kill?" as the Senator ducked into a police van. At least this sharp action prepared us to go to the Republican Convention on the offensive. It will lead to sharper struggle about the church's involvement in IAF illusion-building in the future.

Sick on rancid, reformist roquefort, Red Churchmouse ✪

PLP'er's Union Campaign Exposes Hacks' Pro-Boss Stand

The unionized industrial workforce in the U.S. has been decimated in the past 10 years. From the steel and auto industries to aerospace, relatively good-paying jobs with benefits and a pension are fast becoming extinct. At one industrial local where a comrade is running for a position on the union's governing body, tens of thousands of jobs have been lost due to layoffs and there is a transformation of the industrial working class into a non-unionized workforce composed largely of immigrant workers employed by subcontractors.

The ruling class has decided it's just too expensive to pay workers decent wages and pensions when there are wars to fight to secure oil profits and global domination. Peter Peterson, chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations — a ruling-class policy-making group — wrote recently that the U.S. must choose "between retirement security and national security." Essentially he was saying that "entitlement programs" (i.e., Social Security, pension plans, Medicare, etc.) must be eliminated, or at least reined in substantially, to be able to afford the "stunningly" expensive wars necessary to secure U.S. global domination. ("Riding for a Fall," Foreign Affairs, 9/1/04)

Although our comrade has little chance of winning the election itself, due to the current leadership's mafia-style hold on power, he has influenced the tone of the debates surrounding the elections. We have distributed thousands of leaflets throughout the plants linking the attacks on industrial workers to the war in Iraq, opening up hundreds of discussions. A long-term conflict like the one in Iraq essentially requires a "war economy." The incredible expenses involved with making war, upwards of $200 billion, requires a grinding down of the working class, squeezing as much value for as few dollars as possible and diverting the surplus towards the war effort.

Faced with incredible odds, what are industrial workers to do? From where can we draw strength? The unions offer coalitions with the companies and politicians, staking workers' futures with those of the company and of U.S. capitalism. We say stake our future on the strength of the working class and the fight for communism. Only a mass communist party engaged in struggle for revolution offers any hope for workers' survival. We either fall into line with the fascist grinding down of the working class and take what we can get (nothing at this rate), or we organize to build PLP, to build a communist party that fights for workers' power.

Garment workers strike in New York City against Judith Lieber Handbag manufacturer.

The local leadership refuses to link attacks on workers to the war in Iraq. After a speech to shop stewards outlining the problems with the Pension Guarantee Corporation — a federal agency — and its inability to actually cover pensions abandoned by corporations, and linking those problems to the costs of the war, a union business rep told our comrade those problems were "just economic," unrelated to the war.

Meanwhile, some shop stewards, risking their positions and even their jobs, took leaflets and volunteered to support our comrade's election bid. Not only are these workers pissed, but they're motivated enough by the politics to act despite risks to their own economic well-being.

Since the union has staked its future with the rulers, it cannot afford to attack the ruling class for its assaults on workers. The union leaders are agents of the ruling class. We are NOT. We represent workers' interests and offer the only real alternative, a long hard struggle for communist revolution, for workers' power.✪

Imperialist War Budget Attacks LA Hotel Workers

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 20 — Union leaders say it's "illegal" for hotel workers to picket while union and management are in mediation, but it seems perfectly legal for the Wilshire Grand Hotel to replace 17 union laundry workers with scabs!

On September 13, thousands of hotel workers in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. authorized a strike. Three days later, the laundry workers arrived at the downtown luxury hotel where some have worked for 38 years, only to discover that non-union "replacement workers" held their jobs. They were told they could return to work only by accepting the bosses' demands.

At a press conference in front of the hotel the next day, the laundry workers chanted, "The workers, united, will never be defeated." Meanwhile, HERE (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees) president Maria Elena Durazo explained to reporters that the union was doing everything possible to avoid a strike or lockout.

The last thing Durazo wants is to unleash the power of a united working class. Instead, she's telling workers to rely on politicians, the clergy and the same federal mediator who presided over the stunning defeat of last winter's grocery workers' strike. The union is filing a lawsuit challenging the lockout of the laundry workers, but refuses to allow any picketing because "we agreed not to protest during mediation."

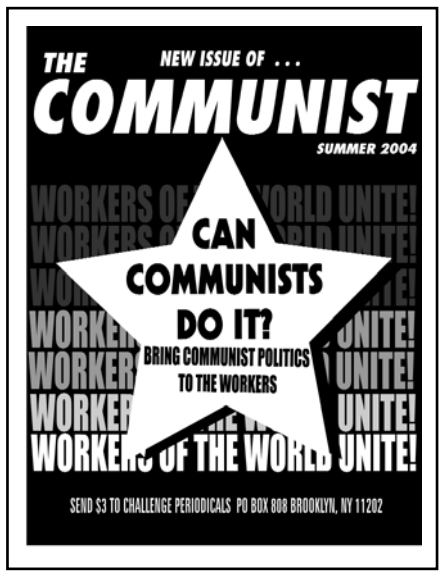
HERE leaders are organizing an electoral campaign among their members and supporters for a healthcare insurance initiative (Proposition 72) on the November ballot. They're building the illusion that "we can make the system work," using financial backing from the liberal capitalist Liberty Hill foundation. Corporations like GM complain that healthcare costs, especially for retirees, make them less competitive with their Japanese and German rivals. They want a minimal national health plan, with taxpayers covering the costs and saving GM's profits. Prop. 72 is a California version of that plan. In the current expanding war economy this means health rationing, an attack pushed as a "reform."

LA's liberal leaders and their ruling-class backers don't want workers to see this struggle as "a tale of two cities — one rich, one poor." Instead, they want super-exploited latino/a workers to believe the fairy-tale that they're part of "One LA." This appeal for class collaboration never mentions racism or imperialism and has no relation to bettering workers' conditions. It aims at winning workers to fascism and war.

After the press conference, workers listened intently to two representatives of liberal church groups offering their support. "It's easy to feel isolated and discouraged when you're in a situation like this and the law seems to be stacked against you," said one who represented an inter-religious peace and justice coalition, "but workers in many churches around the city stand with you, and there is no power greater than the working class when it is organized and fighting for its class interests."

Laundry workers were nodding as she continued: "You're in this situation today because we're living in a system based on profits and war. We must struggle for a society based on justice and peace. We're fighting not only for ourselves but for our children and grandchildren. " This was the only speaker citing the growing war, the reason for the attacks on the hotel workers.

If workers strike the nine LA hotels, all workers and students should join their picket lines. We should encourage a strike against the attacks on the workers, the war budget and the war in Iraq, with the message that the latter is costly to workers' health and benefits everywhere (*See 'Deficit' Scam on Page 3*). Building the alliance between all workers and students can become the basis of a fight to destroy this racist, imperialist capitalist system. We can't allow the union leaders to divorce the attack on workers here from the Iraq war.



Workers' power with communist revolution can end these deepening attacks. Capitalism means exploitation and wars for profits. Workers can run society in our own interests, based on production for the needs of our class, eliminating profits and warmongers. We will take this message to the hotel workers.✪

'UNCOVERED' Film Covers Up Democrats' Role As War Party

I'm a member of a campus anti-war group which organized a forum on the war in Iraq, screening Robert Greenwald's Moveon.org-backed film "Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War." A critique of the film was distributed afterwards and a speaker exposed it as a campaign tool for the Democratic Party. He said we must abandon the lesser-evil politics of phony leftists, that real change can never be achieved through the ballot box; it will require a strong, revolutionary, anti-imperialist movement led by communists and communist ideology.

Greenwald's film has become a favorite of liberal-leftists and the "anybody-but-Bush" crowd for its penetrating criticisms of the Bush administration's lies about Iraq's WMD stockpiles and capabilities. While it does expose many lies and deceptions used by Bush & Co. to initially justify the war, it fails to offer a broader analysis of the real reasons why the U.S. ruling class was so eager to invade Iraq: oil profits and increasing inter-imperialist rivalry.

Even more damaging, "Uncovered" — much like Michael Moore's recent "Fahrenheit 9/11" — never mentions the Democratic Party's similar lies about, and decade-long history of, violence against Iraqi workers. The film hides the parallel imperialist agendas of Democrats and Republicans and the U.S. ruling class's imperialist and fascist plans.

Victimized by the spontaneity and lesser-evilism of the current anti-war movement, many in the audience initially attacked the criticisms of the film and of electoral politics by myself and the speaker, labeling our position "impractical" and "unrealistic." One woman paraphrased Arianna Huffington, saying, "When the house is burning, you don't talk about rebuilding — you talk about putting out the fire."

We made clear the inevitability of capitalist crises and imperialist wars and explained that the Democrats can only represent the interests of the ruling class. To end wars for profit and fascist attacks at home, the working class must destroy the profit system that breeds and lives off these and many more brutal injustices and organize for communist revolution.

Soon a number of people began to defend PL's line on lesser-evilism and on the need to fight imperialism and capitalism directly. Some agreed that the struggle against imperialism should not focus on one administration or one political party, but on the capitalist system as a whole. Others cited the atrocities committed by the Clinton administration.

Ultimately many in the audience realized how "impractical" and "unrealistic" it was to pin their hopes on the Democratic Party, the electoral process and lesser-evil politics, and that both parties serve the interests of monopoly capital. Both are equally hawkish in their implementing the imperialist agenda. The endless lesser-evil game of playing pin the donkey's tale on the elephant's ass was exposed as opportunist lies used to draw workers away from communism, the only practical and realistic path toward emancipating the working class.

The forum brought some of my friends in the group closer to PL and to the idea that a communist revolution led by workers, students, and soldiers under the banner of a revolutionary communist party is the only solution to capitalism's evils. A number of contacts were made. This struggle revealed a great potential for sharpening the fight against imperialist war and building PLP.✪

Don't 'Rock the Vote':

My college campus recently had a "Rock the Vote" rally. A good friend and regular CHALLENGE reader encouraged me to attend and struggle to get on stage. Through friendships I made in an anti-war coalition, I was able to get to speak, and did so about the need for revolution.

I began by saying, "Most people who will speak today will say that the most important thing you can do to change the world is to vote on November 2. I disagree." No one booed. I explained that voting will never bring the social change necessary to end the war and create peace. History proves that such change only happens through massive social movements of organized people who have no interest in maintaining a system that is killing them.

I said whoever's elected will not only continue the war, but also the massive racist cuts to education and healthcare, because they serve the capitalist system which needs inequality and war. They will cut these services to finance ever-widening war. I said I don't believe peace and capitalism can ever co-exist. Capitalism breeds terrorism.

I reminded people that the county government recently closed another hospital in our city, and is threatening to close a trauma center, built after a black rebellion, which treats predominantly black and Latin workers. "Every one of us will know someone who dies because of that closure. Closing hospitals is an act of racist terrorism." The audience, especially black and Latin students, loudly cheered and clapped in agreement.

My friends thanked me and I made sure they all received a copy of CHALLENGE. I told them that's where I learn how the working class fights back.

Later, a man I didn't know thanked me, saying, "You actually talked about something real. Everyone else was just saying the same empty things." I gave him the paper.

PLP's line contrasts sharply with some famous "anti-war" intellectuals, who are madly trying to convince many honest people that "anybody but Bush" will be better. The Democrats' record of vicious imperialist war mirrors the Republicans. Kerry promises to manage the war better than Bush, not to end it. In 1964 some urged voting for Democrat Johnson during the Vietnam War because Republican Goldwater "would bomb Vietnam into the Stone Age." Johnson was elected and proceeded to bomb Vietnam unmercifully.

The most recent example of this mis-leadership is Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn supporting Kerry with the petition "Vote to Stop Bush": "For people seeking progressive social change in the United States, removing George W. Bush from office should be the top priority." Marxist scholars like Michael Parenti ignore their own understanding of imperialism and openly back Kerry.

Communists' main job is to serve the workers. That means being the first to speak up when the working class is being misled. Fear of isolation should not stop us. My experience at the Rock the Vote rally showed this.

PLP will not compromise our principles. Especially when there is such a vacuum, we must keep raising our anti-imperialist line and actions. Even if our friends don't agree with us now, they'll respect us, and when our analysis proves correct, will move closer to PL. My main error, which I will correct, was not to fight for action against the war and the war budget. As U.S. rulers prepare for greater attacks on workers in Iraq and in the local hospital closing, we must fight for leadership by organizing against them, presenting the alternative to capitalism. Fight for Communism; we have a world to win!✪

Chavez's 'Anti-Imperialism' Hides Links to Exxon and Big Oil

For years, CHALLENGE has warned many who support Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez as their "savior" from the old crooked ruling class are making a big political mistake. The "anti-imperialist" rhetoric of such nationalist leaders hides their drive for a bigger profit share from their senior partners. Only organizing a mass revolutionary communist party can free workers from these exploiters.

While Chavez "denounces" U.S. bosses, he allows major U.S. companies to operate freely in Venezuela. Some are linked to the Bush gang. The country's state-owned oil company (PDVSA) has strategic relations with over 200 foreign corporations, including Exxon, Enron, Amoco, Conoco and Chevron-Texaco, among the world's richest imperialists.

Venezuela is the world's fifth largest crude oil exporter; 15% of the oil consumed in the U.S. (150,000 barrels daily) comes from Venezuela. This cozy relationship remains under the Chavez government. ExxonMobil, Enron, Amoco and Conoco are exploring for natural gas throughout the country.

In 1993, PDVSA opened up to what became $2 billion worth of foreign investments, producing an additional 260,000 barrels of crude oil daily. Conoco, Exxon-Mobil, France's Totalfinaelf, Statoil, Chevron-Texaco and Phillips divided up the Orinoco strip. Three of the four blocs in the Delta platform are already assigned for the exploration and exploitation of natural gas — with an estimated 38 billion cubic feet of gas — and the 4th is probably slated for Texaco-Chevron and Statoil. They already share operations with PDVSA.

PDVSA is also well-established in the U.S., controlling Oklahoma-based CITGO. Its refineries handle one million barrels daily in eight cities in six states. CITGO is the 5th largest gasoline distributor in the U.S. (10% of the market), with 13,000 gasoline stations here and in Puerto Rico. It's also the 4th largest distributor of airplane fuel and is first in other distilled products.

Chavez maintains he won't halt exports to the U.S. PDVSA made that clear in ads in the Venezuelan press just before the August 15 referendum (won by Chavez), which also highlighted PDVSA's good relations with Exxon, Chevron and Conoco-Phillips. After all, 60% of all PDVSA exports of crude goes to the U.S. Chavez admitted the U.S. has 85% of all foreign investments in Venezuela.

"The presence of Chevron-Texaco in Venezuela," says Chavez, "indicates that our relationship with the U.S. is historical and deep. We aspire to have the same dynamism in our political, social and all other relations as we have in the commercial ones."

There's a legal dispute between INTESA, a mixed company set up by PDVSA, and SAIC (Science Applications International Corp) to give support and maintenance to PDVSA. Chavez threatened to seize total control of INTESA because SAIC participated in a general strike to topple Chavez, threatening oil production. SAIC claims total control of INTESA based on U.S. laws and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Alí Rodríguez Araque, PDVSA President, countered by saying: "The fact that there are a lot of companies investing in Venezuela's oil industry, totaling over $25 billion so far, is a clear demonstration that we are dedicated to the highest levels of legal and commercial standards."

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Two journalists, Alexander Foster and Tulio Monsalve, exposed who's behind SAIC: J.R. Beyster, its President, is a member of the Security Advisory Committee on Telecommunications for the Bush administration. SAIC's Board of Directors includes Melvin Laird and William Perry, former Secretaries of Defense; John Deutch and Robert Gates, former CIA directors; retired General Max Thurman, who led the U.S. invasion of Panama; Donald Hicks, former Pentagon chief of investigation; Wayne Downing, former chief of Special Forces; Gen. Jaspers Welch, former coordinator of the National Security Agency; and Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, former CIA and NSA director.

SAIC has won important Pentagon contracts designing aerospace military security systems, as well as the Defense Department's information program. It also works with the world's key oil companies like BP-Amoco, PDVSA'S leading international competitor. (All information from Proceso magazine, Mexico City, 8/22/04.)

Not surprisingly, the world's biggest oil companies were happy Chavez won (see CHALLENGE, 9/8) because he guarantees stability for now. Losing to the old bosses would have sparked mass rebellions by the workers — mostly dark-skinned — who hate the old racist ruling class. Carlos Andres Perez, the Social-Democrat former Venezuelan President and current opposition leader now exiled in Miami and the Dominican Rep., sent troops in 1989 to crush a mass workers' rebellion (known as El Caracazo), murdering over 1,000 workers and youth. While U.S. bosses would prefer a more pliable pro-U.S. government in Venezuela, they must accept Chavez for now, despite his populist rhetoric and flirting with Fidel Castro. Meanwhile, the Bush gang still supports the anti-Chavez forces led by the racist old bosses to use when they need them.

Although Chavez has used the recent oil bonanza to give workers some crumbs, this won't alleviate the extreme poverty and super-exploitation suffered by most. PLP fights to win Venezuela's militant anti-racist workers to build a revolutionary communist movement and fight for control of the oil wealth, to share according to workers' needs.✪

Thailand's Youth Forced Into Sex Slavery in Trillion Dollar Industry

Chiang Mai, Thailand — Cruel and unrelenting, the laws of supply and demand force thousands of men and women into the streets here each evening searching for work. Throughout Thailand, over 300,000 dispossessed working-class youth have been transformed into sex slaves for wealthy tourists from Europe, Australia and the U.S.

Thailand's infamous sex tourism is a trillion-dollar-a-year-industry. Although most "sex workers" say they began working to avoid a life of poverty, a host of fake intellectuals and profit-grubbing bosses routinely defend prostitution as "consensual sex." This treacherously denies the gross economic, legal and educational inequalities that exist between buyer and seller. It implies that the sale of one's body for sex is a "freely-made economic choice." The human reality is otherwise.

As one sex worker explained, "In my home I could catch fish with my hands, hunt birds in the forest, herd cows on horseback, plant rice and make my own clothes. I only needed money to buy sauce for cooking." At eleven, her mother died, and she was sent to Bangkok to clean hotel rooms. Denied citizenship, identity, education and legal employment, she found herself forced into prostitution, made to drink alcohol by her boss, displayed naked for the amusement of clients and pimped to the highest bidder. Many sex workers become addicted to alcohol after using it for years to overcome their aversion to this life.

A bizarre debate between liberal reformers and the Thai government seeks to redefine the rules for this dehumanizing sex trade. In the past, the government in the past played the role of pimp by registering prostitutes under the Venereal Disease Control Act of 1909 and the Sex Trade Control Act of 1928. Then in 1960 the former dictator, Sarit Thanarat, officially outlawed prostitution. Nevertheless the sex trade increased dramatically during the next decades, spurred by the presence of U.S. soldiers on leave from the Vietnam War and later by international tourism.

In 2003, liberal NGOs, advocating on behalf of sex workers, demanded decriminalization and the enforcement of occupational health and safety standards like those in other industries. Then the Thai government seized an opportunity to profit from the trafficking of women and children by proposing "legalization" instead, allowing authorities to tax and profit from sex work without insuring such basic securities as sick leave, maximum working hours or emergency fire exits in brothels. Neither side questions the economic and political system that drives young workers into this activity in the first place.

Illegal and unsafe abortions are common, performed by untrained personnel and sometimes by the women themselves. Many women die from complications. From a sample of 4,588 women admitted to Thailand hospitals for symptoms related to induced abortions, nearly half had serious complications such as severe bleeding or infection. In many cases there were perforations of the uterus. Five women in this group died. The World Health Organization estimates that unsafe abortions cause between 50,000 and 100,000 deaths per year worldwide.

Some sex workers buy the liberal line, resisting the idea that they're victims of a system that exploits women. Instead they view prostitution as "women setting limits, gaining in economic strength, and acquiring a detailed knowledge of male sexuality and emotional needs," comparing their work to other high-risk occupations such as psychiatric nurses, soldiers, taxi drivers or liquor store attendants.

Sex worker advocates insist that rather than view these women as passive and misguided, society should regard them as "rebelling inside a patriarchal structure, turning the situation to [their] own social and economic advantage." While this seems less oppressive than the religious ideas used to justify the super-exploitation of sex workers ("The sinners deserve their fate!"), in reality the liberals are defending a brutal, exploitative system. It's the legal and economic inequalities of capitalism that enable sex tourism to exist in the first place.

Rampant prostitution disappeared from both Russia and China in the years after communist-led revolutions when workers ran those countries. Once every young person was guaranteed education and employment in the Soviet Union of the 1920s, the sex trade disappeared. For decades after the 1949 Chinese socialist revolution, prostitution vanished. Thirty years after the revolution, venereal diseases had become so rare that routine prenatal screening for syphilis was abandoned — the tests were never positive! Sadly, as capitalism was restored to those countries, prostitution — along with many other ills of capitalist society, like racism — returned to ruin lives of the new generation.

Tragically, in Thailand where Buddhism is practiced by over 95% of the population, many sex workers see their salvation in religion, spending quantities of emotional energy, time and money praying to exclusively male monks, dead ancestors and hundreds of statues encrusted with jewels and gold. Nearly as disheartening is the slavish devotion most residents show to their monarchy, even though the government is run by telecommunications multi-millionaire Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai party that control an absolute two-two-thirds majority in Parliament.

The recipe for sexual exploitation, Thai style, is the same recipe followed in other capitalist dictatorships. Start with stale economic opportunities that compel young people to abandon their culture and values. Add just enough laws so you can lock up anyone, at any time, for any reason. Mix with a religion that promises perfection "in the next world" and season with plenty of alcohol to enslave their minds and make their bodies compliant. Bake until the ambitions of working-class youth are nothing but ashes.

No deaf gods or aloof monarchy can save young people in Thailand. Only a communist revolution of the heart and mind that spills into the streets will do the job.✪

LETTERS

Airport Workers' Unity Fires Racist

There's been lots of class struggle at my airport job. Workers are angry over racist, sexist and anti-worker mistreatment. Many are immigrant workers from Mexico, El Salvador, Laos, Ethiopia and Somalia (and are also CHALLENGE readers). The company's two-tier system divides workers even more, using two part-time workers for every full-timer. The part-timers receive no health benefits and are overworked. However, a series of racist incidents united the workers to try to get a fascist boss fired.

When this boss first took over, he called an African-American worker "boy." Then when a Mexican worker's child was accidentally injured at home, this boss initially refused to let this worker go to her child in the hospital. Shortly afterwards she was threatened with suspension and termination for attending to her child. The union shop steward (a PLP member) intervened and urged the union to stop the racist boss.

The final straws saw the boss refusing to allow a worker having an allergic reaction to a chemical at work to go to the hospital, and then yelling at an Ethiopian worker to bring her to the verge of tears.

The workers then united and demanded the union — the SEIU — get this racist boss fired immediately. It worked!

This is a significant victory on the shop floor, but we live in a capitalist society that's racist against workers at home and imperialist abroad, as in Iraq. The system can replace one racist boss with another, but they need to maximize profits from exploiting both immigrants and non-immigrants. Only destroying this system altogether can eliminate racism.

AIRPORT COMRADE

Youth Thirsting For Red Ideas

"Dad, when is there going to be another cadre school?" "What do you think philosophy is? Tell me. Explain it to me so I can see if we agree on it." "What is your main contradiction?" Questions like these abound in my house these days.

My children, one a university student and the other in high school, attended the youth cadre school and returned very emotional about it. My wife and I are Party members and feel very proud that our children are part of the struggle to learn the Party's ideas and are willing to join.

At first I thought it was risky to send my children to this school, given the repression surrounding us, but my class consciousness won out. My children are part of the working class and need to learn how to survive in this rotten system and to fight to destroy it and create a system that meets workers' needs — communism.

"And what about me?" protested our youngest child. "When am I going to a school like this? They got to go and I didn't."

"Your time will come," my wife replied. "It's a process and you're part of it."

Let's go forward, comrades. Sometimes the march is slow, but the march continues.

A COMRADE FATHER

French CP Fair Hosted by War Merchants

The French "Communist" Party newspaper L'Humanité held its annual fair in early September. One can get a lot of material at such fairs, and usually a big plastic bag to put them in. Of course, there was lots of political stuff. But, according to journalist Michael Collon (rebellion.org), the bag was "courtesy of Dassault, the French defense industry giant, an official sponsor of the fair." Monsieur Dassault, the company's CEO, is one of the richest men in France. His latest acquisitions include the mass media, imposing an iron-like censorship on whatever he controls.

That wasn't all. L'Humanité has an ad by EADS, a European multi-national arms manufacturer, on the first page of its official program brochure. It lists all the deadly weapons the world's bosses use to kill workers: its combat helicopter Eurocopter, the Eurofighter jet, the Gladio spy satellite system, its Meteor missile and its Airbus A400M, capable of transporting hundreds of soldiers to Central Africa to enable French bosses to continue to super-exploit workers and steal the region's resources.

But this is not surprising. The French "C"P long ago abandoned any revolutionary principles. It helped General Charles DeGaulle crush the 1968 worker-student rebellion that threatened French capitalism. It now sides with French and European imperialism in their rivalry with U.S. imperialism. L'Humanité has become just another voice of Europe's imperialist war-makers.

MONSIEUR ROUGE

Salvador Sends Poor Soldiers to Iraq

"My grandfather told me things never go well for those who put their noses in other peoples' business," joked a worker. "They only send the children of the poor to be soldiers," a young worker pointed out. "Why don't they send the children of the rich to fight on the other side of the world?"

Recently, Islamic terrorist groups have threatened three times to launch attacks in El Salvador if more Salvadoran troops were sent to Iraq. El Salvador is the only Latin American country with troops there. In August 2003, the first 360 soldiers left for Iraq. Last February, they were replaced by 380 others. Despite the current Salvadoran leadership agreeing initially to one year's duty, they bowed to their U.S. masters to continue the troop presence for at least another six months.

Salvadoran President Saca has been lying about this since he took office. Bush sabotaged his plans when he took the U.S. imperialist position about the immigration policy and the Free Trade Agreement "negotiated" between the U.S. and Central America. Bush never helped Saca with any of this in exchange for dispatching Salvadoran troops to Iraq.

The Islamic group warned that, "The sending of Salvadoran troops will be a declaration of war against the Muslims in Iraq, which will force us to launch a war against you and to take the conflict to El Salvador. No citizen," they continued, "will have security in El Salvador when the soldiers get to Iraq.... We are not responsible for spilling blood in El Salvador because we've warned you against this decision." Of course, since these are terrorists — not class conscious anti-imperialists — fighting for their "own" nationalist bosses, they threaten to randomly attack Salvadoran workers, not the bosses who force the troops to go to El Salvador.

The warnings started when one terrorist group (Mohammed Atta Brigade-Al Qaeda Jihad) published a threat on its web page to begin attacks inside El Salvador. Despite this, Saca is sending a third contingent. "We have a duty to fight international terrorism and to help the people of Iraq rebuild," said Saca. "Our troops will march in the middle of August."

The Salvadoran working class doesn't believe these stories about "reconstruction," since only troops for war, not engineers or construction workers, were sent. The military has trained the soldiers for patrols, capturing people and manning check-points, not for repairing houses. However, these U.S.-trained Special Forces were instructed in jungle combat, not in desert fighting.

The Salvadoran government serves the capitalist system, specifically U.S. imperialism, in its "negotiations" of the Free Trade Agreement, and its fascist plans like Puebla Panama (a free trade zone from southern Mexico to Panama). The Salvadoran capitalists don't care about right-wing al Qaeda terrorists massacring workers in El Salvador. On the contrary, they hope it will happen.

No imperialist or capitalist offers us an end to exploitation, racism or imperialism. We must fight to destroy capitalism and replace it with a communist system that smashes all borders and unites workers internationally, based on mutual respect, solidarity and class interest.

A COMRADE

NEW T-SHIRT!

Put forward a revolutionary line this election year with Progressive Labor Party's white T-Shirt that reads:

REVOLT! DON'T VOTE

SIZES: M, L, XL. Send $10 plus $1 for shipping and handling.
Check or Money Order to:CHALLENGE PERIODICALS
PO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202

Mid-East Youth Head for Iraq

The ruling class is going full steam ahead to increase fascism worldwide. A recent trip to a Mid-East country showed me how the term fighting terrorism is being used to attack the working class and crack down on dissent.

Many of my friends in this country cautioned me to be careful while visiting Internet cafés there because the government's undercover agents spy on people who frequent them and check on what websites they visit. BBC News reported that a young man from that country was sentenced to 20 years for visiting an "illegal" website. When human rights groups questioned this action, the government simply claimed it was fighting terrorism and silenced all opposition.

My friends are fearful of being sent political material over the Internet. But I thought it was important to discuss how we had to organize and fight this increasing fascism worldwide. Although my friends were somewhat skeptical about opposing the rulers, they did agree with much of PLP's communist line.

They also told me some young people here have gone to Iraq and joined the fight against the U.S. It seems anyone who's willing to fight the U.S. is considered a hero in the eyes of those workers who are facing the sharpest blows of capitalism's fascism.

In fact, Osama bin Laden is achieving hero status in the Arab world. Many newborn children are named after him. One of my friend's cousins is nicknamed "bin Laden" as a show of respect. Bin Laden is perceived as a fighter against the U.S. and Israel. Similarly, the so-called insurgents in Iraq are also given this same respect. When I pointed out bin Laden's involvement with the CIA in Afghanistan and his oil interests, it was met with some reservation, but it opened the door for more dialogue. Fake "militants" like bin Laden and Muslim clerics are additional barriers to communist revolution.

Communists know that fascist attacks on workers anywhere on earth are fascist attacks on all workers. We must dispel the illusion that fascism is "in the future" and figure out how to overcome the obstacles the ruling class uses to prevent us from uniting locally and internationally. Although presently many in the U.S. think fascism doesn't exist, workers throughout the world have fewer illusions. They're living under increasing fascism and understand it's here now and spreading!

RED TEACHER

FBI Cointelpro Had Wide Reach

I've periodically seen CHALLENGE make corrections and/or additions to various commentaries. In the article (9/22) listing Democratic administration attacks on the working class, there's a reference to "Cointelpro" as an operation against anti-Vietnam War activists.

It's true this program targeted those opposing that war but Cointelpro had a much wider reach, attacking any and all elements considered "a threat to the internal security of the United States." This included the American Indian, Black Nationalist and radical women's move-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MORE LETTERS

ments.

A major goal was to prevent the rise of a so-called "Black Messiah" that could unite the Civil Rights/Black Power movement here with the struggle of independence movements in Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere.

J. Edgar Hoover named such threats, stating that Malcolm X could have been such a messiah but had become a martyr of the movement; that Elijah Muhammad of the Nation Of Islam was "too old"; that Martin Luther King could be a potential threat if he were to abandon his reliance on so-called white liberal doctrine; and that Stokley Carmichael was a real threat to be such a messiah.

The program eventually listed the Black Panther Party as the greatest threat to U.S. internal security. It had a five-point program to stop the Panthers, one being to stop the massive recruitment of youth. Another used counter-intelligence to build distrust among the Panthers.

The point is that Cointelpro was not limited to Vietnam protesters.

It included the entire "People's Movement" at that time. It was not a program born of an individual (Hoover) or a separate entity (FBI). It was created by the capitalist state that feared the rising tide of the working class and its possible unification against the ruling class.

ONWARD, A READER

Can World War III Be Prevented?

I applaud the comrades in Pakistan for building the PLP and spreading our internationalist, revolutionary communist politics there. It's encouraging to see us proving wrong the world bourgeoisie's "death of communism" wish.

Adding to the CHALLENGE response (9/22) about the point in the Pakistani comrades' letter that World War III could be "averted" if we win enough people to our ideas: unfortunately, as long as there is capitalism and imperialism, there will be wars for profits. World War III can't be averted. For instance, even though communists led the Soviet Union — 1/6 of the world's surface — in the 1930s and '40s, the Nazis, at first backed by U.S., British and French bosses, began WWII in great part to roll back the Bolshevik Revolution. We've learned from such history that the only way to end imperialist war is to smash capitalism throughout the world with communist revolution. World War III would present workers, soldiers and youth the opportunity to turn that imperialist war into revolution, either during or after that war.

A communist analysis of imperialism shows that another large-scale war between opposing imperialists is not only possible, probable, and certain, but is actually necessary because of the drive for maximum profits.

Our task as communists is to prepare and organize the masses to ensure that WWIII will be the bosses' last war.

YOUNG RED READER

Cosby Always Served Bosses

CHALLENGE'S comment (8/4) on Uncle Bill Cosby's racist attacks on young black people wasn't the whole history. He wasn't any "typical" sellout. He peddled his ass from the start.

Cosby started as a comic in the early sixties, but his career leapt when he played a CIA type on the TV show "I Spy." There weren't a whole lot of dark-skinned CIA agents in real life in those days, and that was a good thing for black people generally.

Cosby was shoveling out the phony "pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps" crap for decades. His comedy routines and TV shows weren't done just for laughs. They portrayed black youth in very negative stereotypes. And it's not much of a stretch to charge him with having lent a major propaganda hand in the attacks on black people in general. (A good contrast might be made with Richard Pryor's early material: very pro-working class, though certainly not revolutionary.)

A daughter from outside marriage sued him for support, and Cosby ridiculed her from the witness stand. No doubt this incident reinforced his hatred for working-class youth and mothers, and even prompted the reactionary New Yorker magazine to criticize Cosby. He didn't care. Cosby made his pile of money and that's what counts most to these pro-fascists. People like Jesse Jackson, Sharpton, Mary J. Blige, Kweisi Mfume have become a cheering squad for this racist.

NORTH COUNTRY RED

It's Not Bush or Kerry; It's Capitalism

The article in your last issue (9/22) showed that the Republicans' claim of "job creation" is just a mirage. As reported in a recent N.Y. Post John Crudele column, "the unemployment rate is…a numbing 9.5% when you count people who are out of work and too discouraged to keep looking." As CHALLENGE has consistently reported, it's even worse when counting millions working part-time who seek but can't find full-time jobs.

So the Republicans' claim about "growing employment" is an outright lie. But the Democrats are just as bankrupt. Kerry says in the month remaining before the election "there is no chance [the Bush administration] can make up for 1.6 million private-sector jobs lost since January 2001." But what would Kerry do? Turn capitalism upside-down? The fact is the profit system has mass unemployment built into it. There has never been a time every worker had a job, and there never will be as long as capitalism exists.

Both Bush and Kerry represent a system that thrives on what Karl Marx called "the reserve army of the unemployed." Voting for either one is voting to continue a system that breeds joblessness. Only organizing for revolution that eliminates profits can end unemployment (as happened in the Soviet Union of the 1930s and '40s.

OLD-TIME RED

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

Abu Ghraib methods here

"I do not view the sexual abuse, torture and humiliation of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers as an isolated event," says Terry Kupers, a psychiatrist who has often testified about human rights abuses in U.S. prisons. "The plight of prisoners in the USA is strikingly similar to the plight of the Iraqis who were abused by American GIs. Prisoners are maced, raped, beaten, starved, left naked in freezing cold cells and otherwise abused in too many American prisons, as substantiated by findings in many courts that prisoners' constitutional rights to remain free of cruel and unusual punishment are being violated. (Creators Syndicate, 8/8)

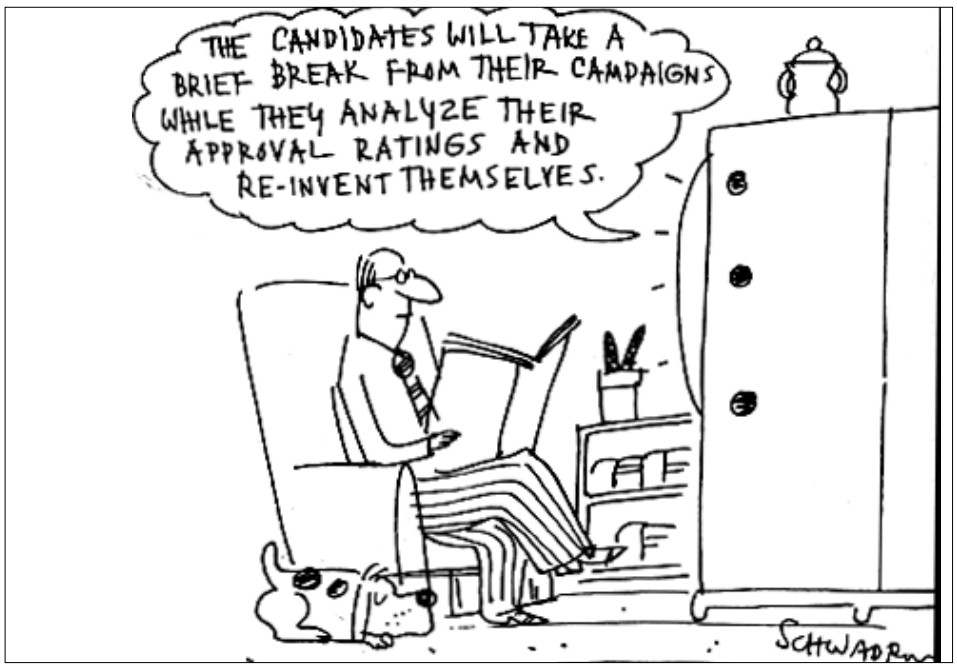
Low pay is real stress

It is noteworthy that in news media coverage of job stress, the emphasis is usually on educated middle-class professionals who, in fact have many choices — including a lower-pressure job or simply working less. All this hand-wringing over the suffering of the relatively fortunate only distracts us from the plight of Americans whose work lives are really stressful: those who are paid $7 or $8 an hour don't have health insurance and lack the skills to education to better their lot.

Life for these workers is a tightrope act without a net…. (NYT, 9/19)

Exec's only job is profit

Peter F. Drucker, the preeminent student of American management: "If you find an executive who wants to take on social responsibility, fire him fast." (NYT, 9/19)


THE CANDIDATES WILL TAKE A BRIEF BREAK FROM THEIR CAMPAIGNS WHILE THEY ANALYZE THEIR APPROVAL RATINGS AND RE-INVENT THEMSELVES.
SCHWADRON

Big US co. poisons Asians

BUYAT BAY BEACH, Indonesia — First the fish began to disappear. Then villagers began developing strange rashes and bumps. Finally in January, Masna Stirman, aided by a $1.50 wet nurse, gave birth to a tiny, shriveled girl with small lumps and wrinkled skin….

The infant's death came after years of complaints by local fishermen about waste dumped in the ocean by the owner of a nearby gold mine, the Newmont Mining Corporation, the world's biggest gold producer, based in Denver….

Environmental groups and, increasingly, government officials charge that it employs practices not tolerated at home….

About 120 villagers were waiting to be examined in June….Thirty of the villagers had tumor-like growths, said one of the doctors, Jane Pangemanan….

"I was shocked by what I saw," she said…. About 80 percent showed symptoms of poisoning by mercury and arsenic. (NYT, 9/8)

US trains killers of workers

Since 2002, American military trainers have been instructing Colombian soldiers there in counterguerrilla techniques….

The attorney general's office said late Monday that Colombian soldiers assassinated three union leaders last month, an account that contrasts sharply with the army's earlier contention that the three men were Marxist rebels killed in a firefight.

The attorney general's announcement vindicated union leaders in Colombia and Europe who said the army had killed three defenseless union activists and then tried to cover the matter up.

Colombia is by far the world's most dangerous country for union members, with 94 killed last year and 47 slain by Aug. 25 this year… (NYT, 9/8)

Trying to spin Iraq

"There are areas where difficulties remain," (the response by Scott McClellan, the White House press secretary, to a question about Iraq). (NYT, 9/19)

Bring this lesson to class?

"If con is the opposite of pro,"… then isn't Congress the opposite of progress?" Be prepared to discuss this… (NYT, 9/16)

Unsafe — but profitable!

… the Food and Drug Administration….and seven drug makers had failed for years to warn doctors and patients that most antidepressants have not proved effective in treating depression in children and that some studies suggest they may cause some children to become acutely suicidal. In 2002, nearly 11 million prescriptions for the drugs were given to children, 2.7 million of them to children under 12.

Seven top executives from drug giants like Pfizer, Wyeth and GlaxoSmithkline were sharply questioned about why the companies had collectively failed to publish or publicize results of studies showing that their drugs had not proved effective in Treating teenagers and children. (NYT, 9/10)

State Power — Part III

Criminal Huntington Justifies U.S. Bosses' Wars

(*The first article in this series on state power dealt with the government as the key instrument of the bosses' dictatorship. The second described the complex relationship between official and unofficial arms of the state apparatus and the process that turns racist ideology into racist policy. This one traces the parallel trail that leads from imperialist ideology to imperialist foreign policy and the role the state plays in the process.*)

The long, shameful career of Samuel P. Huntington illustrates the close link between the government, major universities and the think-tanks and foundations that define and justify U.S. bosses wars to maintain their world domination.

Huntington is the Weatherhead University Professor at Harvard, where he directs the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and chairs the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. The Olin Foundation reflects the views of the more openly right-wing section of U.S. bosses, but it still camps under the tent of the dominant liberal establishment. Every member of the Harvard Corporation belongs to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) or the Brookings Institution, both leading liberal think-tanks.

Huntington considers himself an "old-fashioned" Democrat. He plans to vote for Kerry and was "deadset" against Bush, Jr.'s Iraq adventure. (New York Times Magazine, 5/2/04)

Although Huntington may disapprove of the current White House tactics for securing Persian Gulf oil, nonetheless he's a leader among academics who rationalize U.S rulers' goals and the racist lies that disguise them in order to validate the wars needed to carry them out. In 1993, he published an article in the CFR's magazine Foreign Affairs, entitled "The Clash of Civilizations." The phrase caught fire. Actually, Huntington didn't invent it; he stole it from a fascist British professor named Bernard Lewis, who had coined it in 1964.

A CALL FOR ALL-OUT WAR

In Huntington's version of this pseudo-theory, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the class struggle is now dead. Ideology is dying. In the future, "the great divisions among humankind will be cultural...the United States must forge alliances with similar cultures....With alien civilizations, the West must be accommodating if possible, but confrontational if necessary." (Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993)

Huntington adds the usual academic disclaimers and pleas for tolerance, but his message is clear: get ready for all-out war between the "civilized" West and the "barbarians" in the Muslim and Arab world.

After 9/11, the "Clash of Civilizations" took on a life of its own, launching a jingoistic anti-Arab witch-hunt and paving the way for the U.S. military's wanton slaughter of Iraqi civilians, including thousands of children. Huntington's racist notion of "alien civilizations" had already helped dehumanize Arab people in the minds of U.S. workers, helping the liberal Democrat Clinton to carry out regular bombing raids over Iraq and a deadly sanctions policy that led directly to more than a million Iraqi deaths between 1992 and 2000, most of them young children.

The Hitlerite ravings of this prominent professor are used to mask inter-imperialist oil rivalry as a "conflict among cultures," first to the limited audience of think-tank and university specialists and then to the mass media. After Huntington had published his Foreign Affairs article, the process almost duplicated the popularization in the late 1960s and early '70s of Arthur Jensen's racist claims about the "genetic inferiority" of black workers. (See CHALLENGE, 9/22)

The article became a book, entitled "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order." More importantly, the networks and print media launched a mass campaign to spread Huntington's thesis. The usual "loyal opposition" debates took place, during which various liberal opponents had their chance to take issue with Huntington over details. However, in the end the deck had been stacked, and the norm had become — and remains today — the overwhelmingly racist characterization of Arab and Muslim peoples that fills the airwaves and the press. All this started in the pages of the Liberal Establishment's leading foreign policy journal.

THE CARTER DOCTRINE: WAR FOR OIL

Huntington has also worked directly with the official state apparatus, always for Democratic administrations. Under Jimmy Carter, he was Coordinator of Security Planning at the National Security Council, serving under Zbigniew Brzezinski, another academic (Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins), whose recent "The Grand Chessboard" gave U.S. bosses their current blueprint for continuing world domination. Huntington and Brzezinski therefore played a key role in helping elaborate the "Carter Doctrine," announced in 1980, which commits the U.S. to wage war to prevent any "hostile power" from seizing Persian Gulf oil. This grand strategy continues today, as presidential policy from Bush, Sr. through Bush, Jr. demonstrates.

Huntington's contribution to U.S. imperialism's genocidal wars goes back to his 1957 book, "The Soldier and the State," complaining that U.S. society wasn't sufficiently militarized. He called for the U.S. to establish a global empire similar to the pre-Civil War Southern slavocracy. Within a few years, Huntington was tapped as a consultant to the U.S. State Department under President Lyndon Johnson. At the height of the Vietnam War, he reported that the only way to pacify Vietnam was a strong Vietnamese police force — i.e., homegrown fascism. It didn't work, and Huntington complained later that his advice hadn't been followed. The U.S. military adventure ended in a fiasco, but Huntington hasn't stopped trying — and the bosses haven't stopped listening. His 1968 "Political Order in Changing Societies," another rant about the need for social order, still appears on college reading lists as a "classic" theory of "nation-building." His 1975 opus, "The Crisis of Democracy," which laments the dangers of "excess" democracy, objectively paved the way for the Hart-Rudman commission's current strategy for turning the U.S. into a police state.

PLP in Boston at the DNC convention

TRAVELING THE NAZI ROUTE

Huntington has recently broadened his "clash of civilizations" poison to include an attack on immigrants within the U.S., particularly Hispanic workers. His new book, "Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity," blames Hispanic immigrants for "undermining" the greatness of the United States.

If this sounds familiar, it should. Huntington has invented nothing new here. The notion of "outsiders" and "aliens," from hostile "foreign" cultures and civilizations who "pollute" the supposed purity of a society follows the well-worn road traveled by Hitler and his Nazi gangsters. Huntington is merely their successor wrapped in red, white and blue.

But, as we have shown, he's hardly a lone fascist working in isolation. He occupies a place of honor in the most prestigious U.S. university. He publishes in U.S. imperialism's most influential foreign policy journal. He shuttles back and forth between his Ivy League ivory tower and the halls of government. The insidious message of his racist poison is packaged for mass consumption. He could not exist in this capacity without the full support of the rulers' state apparatus, which promotes him because he serves its most essential needs.

Huntington is a valuable case in point for communists to study and explain, because he is typical of the relationship among intellectuals, ideology, policy and the state under the profit system. Many others, including his pal Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger (Brzezinski's Republican Tweedle-dum), could have served the purpose. Our task here is twofold. First, we must expose their lies and show how these lies serve the bosses' class agenda. Second, we must deepen our understanding of their relationship to the state and work to arm millions with this understanding. In the process, we will advance our ability to build a Party that can organize workers to smash this state and the ruling class that will wield it as a weapon against us until we do so.

(Next: How the rulers use the state apparatus as an instrument of internal struggle among themselves.)

Black, White Auto Workers Unite vs. Racist Lynching Symbol

AUTO WORKERS STRIKE AMERICAN AXLE THIS YEAR.

DETROIT — Black and white workers at the American Axle plant denounced what appeared to be two hangman's nooses hanging on a vehicle here, signing a mass grievance attacking the racist symbols. UAW Local president Wendy Thompson said the group protest showed the racists "did not have the support of the white workers," and partly blamed the company for "promoting a hostile work environment." She said further that the UAW, as an organization, was not doing enough to challenge racist attitudes in workplaces.

The fact is not only did the International union grant billions in give-backs to the auto companies, resulting in layoffs of hundreds of thousands of last-hired black workers, but the union itself mobilized 1,000 Klan members and sympathizers to break a sit-down strike led by PLP in 1973 at the Chrysler Mack Avenue plant. Fighting racism in the UAW will have to be organized by anti-racist rank-and-filers and led by communists, the latter having organized the UAW 70 years ago.✪